



United States Mission to the OSCE

Anniversary of September 11th

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 7, 2006

Mr. Chairman,

Monday marks the fifth anniversary of massive terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11th, 2001. It was not the first terrorist attack on the United States by al-Qaida, but it was the most destructive. Nineteen terribly, terribly wrong and misguided men, armed with nothing more than box-cutters and a fanatic vision, coldly and with great calculation took the lives of three thousand innocent people in a single day. Theirs was an attack that killed citizens from 91 countries, including 30 OSCE participating States and 6 Partners for Cooperation.

For America, September 11th changed the way we look at the world and the threats we face. The threat of terrorism was brought home to the American people with a new level of reality and immediacy. It was no longer an isolated issue. And the acts of that day brought together the international community in a coalition determined to fight terrorism.

That day I was on a return flight from Berlin to Washington, which turned around mid-ocean to return to the safety of Berlin. One of my most vivid memories is of the mountains of flowers and messages that lay outside the American embassy the next morning, an outpouring of feeling that was repeated in front of our embassies all around the world. That support touched the hearts of Americans. We were not alone.

Since then, sadly, terrorist attacks have continued. The United Kingdom, Spain, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Jordan, Denmark and Egypt have been victims of those seeking the destruction of freedom. Each of us faces this potential and violent threat.

The recent uncovering of a terrorist mass murder plot targeting airplanes in London, the failed bombing of commuter trains in Germany, and the shooting of tourists in Jordan earlier this week underscore just how real that threat continues to be, and the need for all of us to continue to work together to fight it. For most of the OSCE community, the threat of terrorism is the most realistic security threat our countries face; this Organization must adjust to that changing reality.

The world has been threatened before. With faith and determination, those that have tried to defeat democracy and freedom have themselves been defeated. Those misguided persons that violate the tenets of freedom so dearly held by the United States and those who awaken us do so at their own peril.

These terrorists want power, control, and to impose extremist views of the world. They are a new type of enemy who have no return address and who do not use conventional warfare. Sometimes they use a perverted religiosity as cover in their attempt to justify murder, terror,

and violence. No faith, repeat, no faith condones the deliberate targeting and killing of innocent civilians, and no cause or grievance can ever justify it. Since Osama Bin Laden declared war on the United States ten years ago, thousands of people of many nations, religions, races, and beliefs have been murdered as a result of his instigation or incitement of acts of terror. Ironically, as a result of al-Qaida-inspired attacks, more Muslims have been killed than any other group.

The fight against terrorism is a concerted battle over values and principles, the same values and principles of democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights that the OSCE represents. Our challenge is to confront a terrorist ideology that promotes hate, destruction, and death. This anniversary is an appropriate time for us to reaffirm our unequivocal condemnation of all acts of terrorism. We want to work in partnership with nations around the world to confront this ideology of hate and instead foster a climate of hope and opportunity.

In the OSCE, we have worked to combat terrorism over the past five years in a variety of ways. Concrete and practical work has taken place to build our international legal obligations, to suppress terrorist financing, to keep MANPADS out of the wrong hands, strengthen travel document security and prevent movement of terrorists across borders, build democratic institutions and rule of law, promote human rights, tolerance, and multi-culturalism, counter extremism, and address negative socio-economic factors which may contribute to the problem. Lack of opportunity, whether from poor economic conditions, repressive regimes, or discrimination, encourages a climate in which individuals are more vulnerable to terrorist recruitment. In this respect, the OSCE also has a significant role to play. We have also proposed, united and together with the Russian Federation, a conference to explore ways of creating and strengthening public-private partnerships to help combat terrorism.

On this fifth anniversary, the United States reaffirms its commitment to work with all participants and partners in the OSCE and in other fora, to fight this attempt to suffocate liberty. We renew our commitment to our founding conviction: that all people are equal, and equally deserving of justice, respect, opportunity, and dignity. Mr. Chairman and colleagues, to protect freedom, to protect liberty, the United States of America will not walk away. The United States of America will not back down. The United States of America will not bow.

Thank you very much.